

## ENGLISH CITIES WHICH MANAGE THEIR OWN BUSINESS

Special Correspondence of the Deseret News by Frank G. Carpenter.

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Birmingham, England.—How would you like to have a street car ride for a cent? You can get it in Sheffield, where the city owns the tramways and charges different rates, according to distance. I rode from one end of the town to the other for a penny, and my short rides as a rule cost me a halfpenny. The car fares in Liverpool are a penny or two cents for the ordinary trip, and it is the same in Manchester. The rates are not different in old Chester, which was a town in the days of the Romans, and about the same in the college town of old Oxford. In Glasgow the municipality owns the trams and charges one cent a mile, or six cents for five miles. Liverpool one cent a mile and Manchester two cents per mile. There are many of our American cities in which you can ride ten miles for a nickel, which is equal to half a cent a mile, but as the most of our street car rides are short, the British on the average pay much less than we do in the United States.

The cars are mostly double deckers, with seats below and also on the roof, high above which are the wires of the trolley. You ride as high up in the air as though you were on the top of an elephant, but it is delightful, although the cars do not go half as fast as our own.

The tramways are rapidly increasing in Great Britain and the tendency is entirely toward city ownership. A score of different municipalities are now negotiating for the purchase of street cars or are laying down new lines. Many cities own the tramways and lease them out to companies who manage them. In nearly every case the municipal tramways pay a profit, thus reducing the tax rate.

## CITIES WHICH DO THEIR OWN BUSINESS.

I have already written something as to how the British cities are managing their own business. Manchester is making about \$400,000 out of its gas works, electric lights and markets. The markets bring it an income of \$85,000 a year, and at the same time give the best of facilities to the people. The markets have a big cold storage plant and freezing chambers connected with them. As I rode down the Manchester ship canal I went by the abattoirs, which belong to the city. They have wharves and buildings for the accommodation of a thousand head of cattle and one thousand sheep. There are slaughter houses and chilling chambers adjoining them in which 1,200 sides of beef can be chilled in 24 hours.

Manchester now has its own telephone system belonging to the city in which the help girls are city clerks. Glasgow owns its telephones and charges two cents a call or gives you an unlimited number of calls for \$36 a year. Liverpool, Nottingham, Hull, Leicester and a half dozen other cities are now thinking of buying up the telephones or of establishing telephone systems run by the city.

I spent some time in the Sheffield markets during my stay there. These recently belonged to the Dukes of Norfolk, but the government bought them at a big price and is now running them at a profit. London has control over a part of its markets, although the big vegetable and fruit markets of Covent Garden still belong to the Dukes of Bedford. Bolton owns its markets and also

the street cars, gas works, electric lights and tramways.

There are five towns in England which turned into their tax funds \$200,000 last year as the profit of their municipal undertakings, and the extent of such undertakings is steadily increasing. I have told you how the Manchester corporation borrowed \$25,000,000 to loan to the Manchester Ship Canal company, and how Liverpool is making a profit out of its investment of more than \$100,000,000 in docks.

## HOMES FOR THE WORKING PEOPLE.

Many of the city corporations are now erecting homes for their working people. They are buying up the slums and tearing down the buildings which stand upon them in order to put up sanitary tenements, which they rent at low rates. At the same time they are widening the streets and going into what might be called a land office and real estate business. The London county council spent a million and a quarter dollars to wipe out the slums of Bethnal Green, it being estimated that it cost the city \$1,500 for every family that was there turned out before a cent was spent on the new buildings for them. London now has a special housing department connected with the city government, which has charge of such matters. It has 60,000 people in its tenements in the city, and it is erecting cottage settlements on the outskirts. Six thousand people are to be housed in such cottages at Norbury, and 42,000 at Tottenham. When the Tottenham improvements are completed there will be a good-sized town there made up entirely of municipal cottages.

## HOMES AT FIFTY CENTS A WEEK AND UPWARDS.

The tenements which have been put within these cities have a large number in one building. They are, as it were, flats of two or more rooms, rented at different prices, according to the number of rooms. The cheapest two-roomed flats are to be found in Dublin, where they rent for 50 cents a week; similar quarters in Glasgow cost 30 cents a week; in Liverpool 35 cents; and in London, a little more than \$1 per week. The rents are supposed to be on a basis that will pay the running expenses and furnish a sinking fund which will recoup the city for the cost of the buildings within from 50 to 100 years.

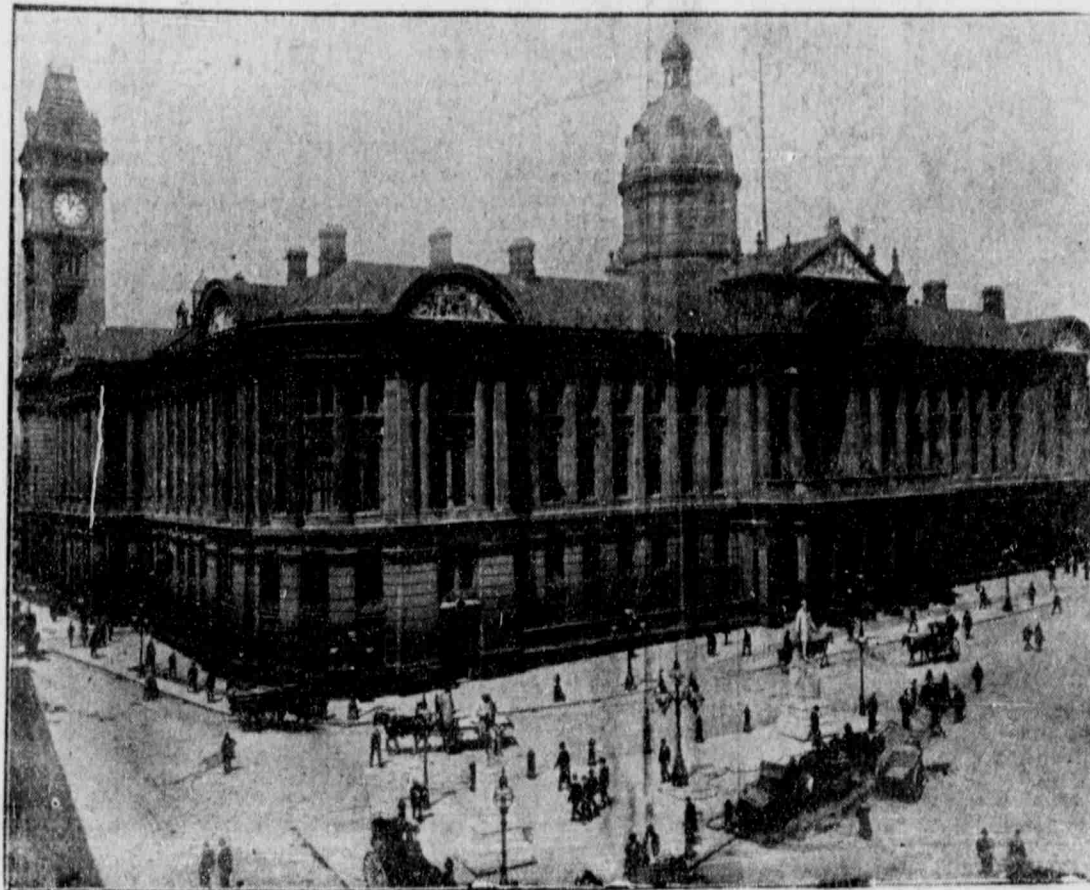
This city of Birmingham, where I am now writing, has been noted for such experiments. It has erected one set of buildings at a cost of \$100,000 which have lodgings for 100 families. There are shops on the ground floor, with tenements above them. The first of these structures was finished in September, 1890, and was at once rented to respectable people at a dollar and twenty-five cents per flat per week. Since then cheaper flat buildings have been erected, some of the rents being so low as seventy-five cents per week.

## A CITY WHICH MANAGES ITS OWN BUSINESS.

Birmingham is noted for the number of things which the city owns. It prides itself on being a business city run by business men on business principles. It makes its own gas, provides its own water supply and has public museums, art schools and galleries. It has extensive parks, cricket fields and other pleasure grounds. It has a sewage farm of 1,300 acres, which cost \$2,000,000. It has public swimming and Turkish baths, and laundries for the poor, where they can have hot water and hot irons for two or three cents an hour.

It has magnificent city buildings. The council house or the municipal building is one of the finest structures of England. It is a great pile built in the renaissance style in the heart of the city, with a dome rising from its center. The main entrance is at the front, and the building is ornamented with sculpture and mosaic showing the arts and industries of Birmingham, with a central group representing Britannia reviewing its manufactures.

They Own the Street Cars, Gas Works, Electric Lights, Markets and the Telephones—A Street Car Ride for a Cent—Gas at a Penny a Night and Flats for Fifty Cents Per Week—Queer Features of Manchester and Liverpool—Glasgow's Municipal Telephones, Which Charge Two Cents a Call—Something About the Sheffield Markets—The Homes For the Working Classes Which London is Building—Birmingham and Its Tenements—How Street Improvements Will Make the Town Wealthy—A Visit to a Municipal Gas Office Which Rents Cook Stoves For Two Cents a Week and Has Slot Machines Which Will Light Your House a Night for a Penny.



Photographed for the Deseret News by Frank G. Carpenter.

## THE MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS OF BIRMINGHAM.

The interior of the building contains a council chamber, the banquet hall and magnificent quarters for the lord mayor. In it there is also a museum

and art gallery and the various city offices. Another fine building is the town hall, designed after the model of a Roman

temple. This is where public meetings are held and where the great city organ plays regularly every week for the benefit of the people.

## WHAT WILL MRS. FAIR'S HUMBLE RELATIVES GET?

BILL SMITH AND WIFE  
(BROTHER OF MRS. FAIR)WHERE  
MRS. FAIR  
WAS BORNTHE FACTORY  
WHERE MRS. FAIR WORKED

MRS. FAIR'S NEW YORK HOME

NORMAN  
OELRICH

## SPAIN WANTS AMERICANS.

SEÑOR DON EMILIO DE OJEDA  
PHOTO BY ALME DUPONT

According to Senor Don Emilio de Ojeda, Spanish envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to Washington, there is great demand in the country of our late enemy for American capital and enterprise. Minister de Ojeda earnestly declares that resentment against United States has now completely died out in his land. He urges our industrial capitalists to turn their eyes and capital to Spain.

The bodies of the late Mr. and Mrs. Charles L. Fair, victims of the terrible automobile accident in France, are now on their way to San Francisco. Wm. B. Smith, a brother of Mrs. Fair, has sold his modest grocery store for \$500 and will follow his sister's body to the grave. The question of dividing the property of the deceased has yet to be decided. The humble origin of the late Mrs. Fair and the claims of her plain relatives to the Fair millions add great interest to this part of the story.

Right back of this hall is perhaps the only monument ever erected as memorial to a living man. It is the bust of Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, who has perhaps done more than any other to advance municipal ownership in the city of Birmingham. The monument bears a medallion bust of Mr. Chamberlain without the eyeglasses, and upon it there is an inscription testifying to his services for Birmingham.

## OLD BIRMINGHAM.

Indeed, the city of Birmingham has been recreated by Mr. Chamberlain and his associates within the past generation. Before I describe it let me tell you something of the Birmingham of the past. The town has for centuries been the industrial capital of middle England. It is situated where was once the forest of Arden, the scene of Robin Hood's adventures and of "As You Like It" and others of Shakespeare's plays. It has iron mines and coal mines not far away, and before coal was used for smelting iron the people here made charcoal from the trees of the forest and thus worked their blacksmith shops and other house industries.

No one knows when the iron making began, and today there is a vast amount of work that goes on in small factories. The city is now perhaps the chief hardware center of the whole world. It has foundries and shops for making steam engines, heavy machinery and cannon. It makes pins and needles by the tens of millions and steel pens and buttons for all parts of the globe. It has glass works and crystal works, bronze foundries and bridge works, and its gun works are of enormous size. There are one hundred thousand factory hands in the city, and it is estimated that ten thousand of these are employed in making guns and rifles. The guns are exported to all countries. The works were pushed to their full capacity during our civil war, when 70,000 guns were shipped to the United States, including a large number which went to help the south.

## THE BIRMINGHAM OF TODAY.

The Birmingham of today is about as large as St. Louis. It has one or two streets as fine as the better streets of St. Louis, and indeed it looks much more like an American city than an English one. The streets are well kept, and notwithstanding the foundries and factories which are scattered here and there upon them everything is remarkably clean.

Birmingham has been called the town of two great streets. Its chief business houses are on these streets, and the buildings have all been put up within the last few years. They are the product of Birmingham's principle of municipal improvement. When Joseph Chamberlain was mayor the business of the town was congested. There were slums in its heart, and it was Chamberlain who planned to wipe the slums out, to build a great street through them, which should be known as Corporation street, and to widen what is now New street, or, in short, to practically rebuild the business heart of the city. This undertaking was begun in 1875 and \$8,000,000 was borrowed to carry it out. Inasmuch as the money was needed at once and it would take time to get an act of parliament authorizing the city to issue bonds Joseph Chamberlain offered to advance \$50,000 to the city for the purpose, other Birmingham capitalists did likewise, though in smaller sums, and the work was immediately begun. The property was condemned and bought, the old houses torn down and the land leased on 55-year leases for the putting up of new buildings. The leases were so worded that at the end of the 55 years the buildings upon the land should revert to the city, so that eventually the Birmingham Corporation will practically own the best part of the municipality. It will then probably be the richest city of the world. The holders of the leases now pay a regular rent to the city, and magnificent structures have taken the places of the old slums.

## THE BIRMINGHAM ARCADES.

One of the features of the new building is a system of arcades which run here and there through them from street to street. These are beautiful structures, roofed with iron and glass, forming large passageways containing stores as good as you will find in England. The interior walls are of tiles and the fronts of the stores are plate glass.

These arcades are filled with shoppers at the busiest times of the day, and they form a promenade and visiting place for the people. They are extremely light. Indeed, I took some snapshots photographs within them which have come out very well.

In my strolls about the arcades I saw many evidences of the American invasion. One shop was filled with American candy, another had tomato ketchup from Philadelphia, sweet pickles and baked beans from Baltimore, and a third jars of apple butter from Pittsburg and canned soups from Chicago.

The most important sign that met my eye as I came up from the new station to the junction of Corporation street and New street was that of the New York Life Insurance company, and the next thing I saw was the American flag waving from the third story of a big pink building further down the way, with the words "United States Consulate" on the window behind it. A little later on I walked into the consulate and spent an hour or so there with Mr. Marshall Halstead, who is Uncle Sam's consul and business representative in this industrial section. He was free enough in expressing his opinions about American trade, but said that he could not allow himself to be quoted as the Birmingham people have become so sensitive on the subject of the American invasion that an interview upon such lines would do more harm than good.

## IN A CITY GAS OFFICE.

It was in company with Mr. Halstead that I visited the city gas office in the Council house to learn something about how these corporations manage their gas works. I find that nearly all the cities of England are now gradually buying the gas plants. Two hundred and thirty of them have already done so, and they are extending the service so that the poorest man can have his gas at low cost.

We first entered the gas counting room, where we found clerks taking in money from the consumers, and from there went on to the sales room, where all sorts of gas fixtures, from gas tips to gas stoves, are sold. The Birmingham Gas company, which controlled the business when the city decided to own it, had a fixture store and the corporation bought this with the plant. The prices of the fixtures are about the same as in the United States, but the terms of payment are much more lenient. The city will sell you gas fixtures on time, and it will even rent them out for a consideration.

## GAS COOKERS FOR A DOLLAR A YEAR.

If the Birmingham man does not care to buy a gas stove the city will put in one for him at a rent of 2 cents a week, or \$1.04 cents a year, or he can have a larger stove for 3 cents per week. A small gas boiler about the size of a tea plate with little holes about the edge, is furnished for nothing.

The gas for poor people is largely distributed through penny-in-the-slot meters. These meters are like the ordinary gas meters save that each has a hole in the top. Dropping a penny in the slot opens a valve, which lets out enough gas to run three burners for three hours. The gas can be turned on and off, so that the economical man can burn less and have his lights for perhaps 1 cent per night. The meter is connected also with a gas stove, and I am told that 1 penny will give enough gas to cook a dinner for a family. There are other meters so arranged that you can put a shilling in the slot and get a proportionately larger amount of gas. These meters are used to some extent by the better class families. I noticed especially that all the flexible connecting tubes in this gas office were of American make, and the manager told me that the city bought all such supplies from the United States.

## TO CHRISTEN CRUISER.



Miss Elsie Macombe.

Miss Elsie Macombe of Des Moines will christen the Cruiser Des Moines at Boston this coming September. Gov. Cummins of Iowa and his staff will be present at the launching. The young woman who will preside over the happy event is one of the most beautiful girls in the state of Iowa. She is famous as a society belle, and has spent much time in travel.